

Bristol, February 20<sup>th</sup> 1846.

My dear Mrs. Chapman.

Mr Webb has sent me your long letter to him in reply to some remarks I made to him. Had I entertained the slightest suspicion he would thus have employed my communication, I should have endeavored to avoid the appearance of undervaluing the labours & sacrifices of Am<sup>er</sup>. Abolitionists to which a letter so unreservedly written to Mr. Webb, might reflect.

My chief purpose in writing so much at large to Mr. W. & perhaps so strongly, was to detain sufficient information as to be in no danger of making <sup>any</sup> misstatements in a little notice of Slavery & Abolitionism which I was proposing, to assist the collection for the next Boston Fair, by diffusing some knowledge of the subject among persons in this neighborhood. I knew quite enough of your enterprise to see that some care &



consideration, were needed to say enough,  
without saying too much, but at the same  
time in no respect to deviate from the  
exact truth. Your newspapers furnish  
a very imperfect knowledge of the matter es-  
pecially to those who have time or in-  
clination for only a superficial view,  
and I have found, that ~~where~~ <sup>where</sup> I have attempt-  
ed to instruct & interest & inform by  
sending the "Liberator" with points for  
marked for perusal, I have done  
your cause as much harm as good.

The No. for Jan<sup>y</sup> 30 contains a letter from  
a Nov. Am. of this place to myself which  
shows her views of this matter. I sent  
it to Mr. J. May, & he I presume, for-  
warded to the Lib<sup>r</sup> with an extract  
from mine to him. I have no objection  
to this use of their communications  
the names being suppressed. I have  
sent that No. to a lady who was a  
most liberal benefactor to the Anti-  
Slavery Socy, & she expresses herself as



quite shocked at the name, much <sup>by</sup> more  
the discussion of such a subject as the  
"Rights of God," and with Mr. Garrison's  
comments upon the whole affair.

I do not mention this in proof of our  
good taste, or of Mr. G's bad taste, but simply  
to explain to you that information upon  
Anti-Slavery efforts must be given  
to persons here in a different way from  
what that in which it is communicated  
to each other.  
By our friends on the other side of the  
Atlantic. My desire is to give  
information in such a way as to render  
it acceptable & influential, and I  
feel no right to censure your mode of  
doing so amongst those whom it is  
your province to enlighten.

Mr. Webb requested me not to print  
the trifling notice I have been writing,  
until I had read your letter to him. I  
have gone twice through it, but do not  
find a single word <sup>in my statement</sup> to alter in consequence  
of perusing it. This perhaps you will think



argues rather a stubborn disposition  
in my youth. But interesting as your letter  
is, it shows no new views to me, though  
many points are put in a peculiarly lucid  
& forcible & manner. When I tell you  
that I have been in full correspondence  
with Mr. L. May for the last year or two,  
you will not be surprised at my having  
at least had the opportunity of knowing  
something of your A. S. politics. -

The various separations that have  
taken place in your Society, & the  
very strong language employed by the differ-  
ent parties towards each other, appear  
to us like quarrelling; but in my letter  
to Mr. Webb I had, I believe, principally in  
recollection the long dispute between Mr.  
Garrison & Mr. Rogers, who it seems, were  
once intimate friends. Perhaps you are  
more honest than we are, but if such a  
disputation took place here between two  
persons sincerely interested in the suc-  
cess of an important object, effort I think  
would be made to prevent injury to the  
cause by which would be likely to ensue from



2/ publicity being given to the disputes of some of the leaders in it.

~~The circles~~ In the various associations in this country, the "platform" (as you term it) is I think much narrower than with you: the circles forming them usually consist of those who think alike in politics, & in religion, and these circles are so numerous & varied in their objects, that much useful work is done, & done well. In educational & religious projects, the members of the Establishment do not like any others to unite with them: - in charitable & even Literary Institutions, especially political ones act together, & the management & pecuniary falls to the strangers. The Unitarians, to whom we belong, are a small body here though not deficient in intelligence & worldly respectability; <sup>they are</sup> always ready to unite with others in philanthropic, & miscellaneous educational purposes, but <sup>are</sup> looked upon with coolness, & with absence of sympathy by nearly all other sects. It is much the bolit harm for persons not to unite with those from whom they much differ on any important



matter. Appearances seem to be present that  
the personality in his opinion in politics &  
religion would be less likely than another  
to be elected on Committees. The feeling  
I think is not a really unfriendly one, but  
a disinclination <sup>people have</sup> to associate much  
with persons who do not agree with <sup>them</sup> ~~you~~  
in opinion upon important matters.  
This <sup>it may not exist to such a degree as to prevent</sup> ~~is not~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~seems~~ directly to the common  
object in view. I think too we are apt  
to judge of character generally, from  
too minute traits.

Were such a paper as the "Liberator"  
published here, I think very few persons  
in the numerous committees of our  
benevolent & literary institutions would  
like to have the Editor as a colleague.  
This may appear to you very illiberal,  
but such would be the feeling very  
generally, and I mention the fact in illu-  
stration.

One point is very certain, & its reference  
to it ought to render us charitable in criti-  
cizing your efforts, and you forbearing in  
showing the construction we may put on your  
conduct: — no philanthropic movement



in England affords a parallel to that for the abols.  
of Slavery in America. Our anti slavery Arg.  
is very different & the parties ranged on  
one side & the other limited in comparison with  
those in Am<sup>a</sup>. The evil contended against could  
be but little realized when compared with that in  
Am<sup>a</sup> & opposition to it entailed but little of the  
dinners that it brings upon you.

You must not be surprised (as you have done  
me the honor of "personifying the Practical Abolition  
in Mr. Estlin" <sup>maybe alluded to</sup> ~~that~~ personify those in America  
in Mr. Chapman) ~~you are~~ <sup>you are</sup> surprised  
if when intelligent Americans come hither  
such as Dr. Dewey, Pentecost, McWhinney, &  
others of various professions, both lay & clerical,  
& tell us that they are deeply concerned <sup>in</sup> the ex-  
istence of Slavery, - that they are unwilling  
in their desires & efforts to abolish it; - that  
we are quite incompetent to form a judgment  
of their position & their A. S. exertions; - that many  
whose voices are not heard are the only ones  
really more interested in the matter & are doing  
more than those who are loud & prominent; when  
they assure us that the "Abolition Society" are  
doing mischief, postponing our abolition, in  
increasing the sufferings of the Slave, a point to  
some of their sayings & doings, - "the Brother Lord  
of Phineas," "the Liberator" &c. as specimens of the  
temper of your party, you must not be  
surprised that it requires a very intimate  
knowledge of your <sup>something</sup> party & your plans, - a knowledge  
which few here possess not at once to accord in.



implicit credence to the statement, & to be at  
once satisfied with the reasons given for not for-  
mally joining the Abolitionists. I do not  
mean that the period has as referred to used the  
words exactly, but give them as a general specimen  
of their reasoning.

You seem very anxious to know what  
the precise complaints are against the Abolition-  
ists among those of us who have paid a little at-  
tention to your movement. They are, a belief  
that the strong language used against those who  
do not take your view, argues, ~~not a lack of~~  
<sup>in spite,</sup> but an unchristian spirit. We have ~~always~~  
had much knowledge of W. Indian Masters, &  
peopled of W.I. property, & should always have  
been shocked at the suppositions of many  
of them not being as excellent people as any  
in society: many of them still firmly believe  
that our emancipation has been a great ~~and~~  
wil to the islands & to the slaves themselves. It is  
thought that you do not make sufficient allowance  
for the motives of those who differ from you, - that  
<sup>so with</sup> you extend to them that measure of credit for honesty  
of purpose which you claim for yourselves.

When our Anti Slavery movement was young  
many well wishers for its success were annoyed  
by the scarcely honest statements <sup>to make to</sup> made in favour  
the cause of the cruelties in the W. Indies, individ-  
cases being made to represent a sample of the  
general treatment of the slaves. Many "false  
friends" of this kind were really practised - The  
inconsistency of some of the allegations I had a per-



3/ some opportunity of ascertaining during a visit for  
health to the W. Indies in 1843, and when, among other  
things, I published in a letter to a periodical the result of my  
observations, I was set down at once as a traitor to  
the cause of emancipation, which deserved more  
than I did, after seeing the moral evil of Slavery in  
one or two of our islands. - Now, many here  
believe the cruelty of Am<sup>er</sup> Slavery greatly exaggerated,  
& the "Slavery as it is" is enough to convince the  
few readers who are likely to see it, <sup>namely</sup> that the  
possibility of such cruelties should not be per-  
mitted, I doubt if the style in which it is written  
would not tend to induce the belief that the evidence  
was not <sup>sufficient</sup> ~~such~~ as to convince <sup>us</sup> that ~~it~~ <sup>was</sup> cruelty was  
the rule, kind up the exceptions. There is an  
angry, coarse tone pervading the name on the which  
in our view detracts from the dignity of Truth.

There is certainly some remarkable difference  
of taste & opinion between you & us as to modes  
of expression. You are apt to think less favorably  
of a cause which is advocated by a harsh, rather  
coarse; strong terms seem to us to be most  
needed where the argument is feeblest. The Am<sup>er</sup>  
writers for <sup>Slavery</sup> against ~~us~~ seem also apt in a  
proportion: their "burning indignation" is indeed  
amply apparent; and <sup>we must</sup> ~~we~~ <sup>allow</sup>, that as regards  
the cruelty of Slavery, your organ is certainly not  
so severely possible to read coldly, "Slavery as it is"  
is even a newspaper "the Pelican" which "Mr. S.  
May has just sent me, where in an advertisement  
precede, "open, sheep & beds" for sale!  
26. book a mode of writing as I see at p 114 & 115.



"Slavery as it is," at page 2<sup>d</sup> & last paragraphs  
are very different from what would be adopted by us  
in aiming to produce a strong impression. ~~That~~  
~~seems to be~~ Mr. Garrison no doubt has nu-  
merous admirers, I have the highest opinion of  
his honesty, talent, & independence, but the  
taste he exhibits in the selection of subjects  
for a paper in general circulation is to me  
quite extraordinary, & convinces me of some  
inherent differences between you & us, <sup>altogether</sup> ~~quite~~  
irreconcilable.

You will I fear, think me, after all  
I have said, rather an uncooperative person for ex-  
plaining your movement to others.

If a knowledge of American Slavery in  
England is likely to be any real service to your  
cause, (I fear <sup>it</sup> they can be so but to a very limited  
extent) you are greatly indebted to Messrs  
Chambers for their penny Tract. I presume  
you know it? Mr. S. M. has it. It is  
admirably calculated for our latitude.

Mr Webb is disappointed with it from its not  
giving more credit to the Abolitionists but  
I trust if the good be really done, you will  
not quarrel about who shall have the credit!

Joseph Sturge is looked upon here by those  
opposed to him in politics as such a violent,  
uncompromising, meddlesome attacker of



Slavery in every form & place, that your  
charge of his being lukewarm in the cause  
would be quite remittible to them.  
Mr. J. J. Gurney is also generally considered  
as a thorough A. Slavery person. But no  
good will be gained by any attempt as yet  
to enlighten people here on these niceties  
in A. S. politics: the sinfulness & extent  
of American Slavery, & the indifference  
of your Nation to the evil, are the chief  
points to be forced upon the attention  
of our public.

Feeling myself personally obliged by  
the attention you paid to my letter to Mr.  
Webb, I was unwilling to lose the opportu-  
nity <sup>by</sup> of the next packet of offering you  
my acknowledgments with a few further  
explanation of our modes of thinking  
in reference to your Abolition efforts.

But I so well know how much you are  
engaged, & how valuable your time is, that  
I do not ask you to write to me in re-  
turn: indeed I should be sorry if you thought  
it necessary to do so - My daughters will



return you thanks for your letter to her, &  
will inform you that we hope to continue to  
show our interest in your cause by doing what  
we can to render F. Douglass comfortable and  
useful while he is in Bristol.

Believe me, my dear Madam,  
with much respect,

Faithfully Yours

J. B. Estlin.

I believe I have, on former occasions  
written to Mr. May almost as freely  
to Mr. Webb with the view of eliciting such  
information as was wanted with a view  
and such a means of vindicating the persons  
of the Am. "Liber" as for your friends have  
ought to possess. —